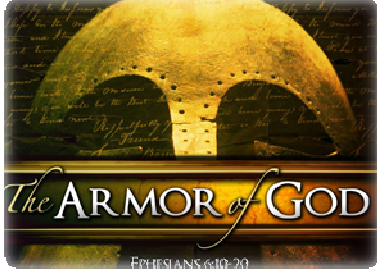




Got Armor?

Romans 13:12: (NASB) *The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.*



Last week we took a hard look at Islam and compared its message of devotion to that of Christianity. We looked at its personal and national approach to "jihad" and saw significant differences from our own Christian faith. Today we will focus on the Christian "jihad" - the Christian's personal struggle to fight our warfare - not against others but against Satan. How do we fight this fight? What are we armed with? What makes us think such a battle against such an enemy can be won?

Who is the enemy and how do we secure our protection for this armed conflict?

Ephesians 6:10-12: (NASB) ¹⁰Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God, so that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.

Who is the enemy?

1 Peter 5:8: (NASB) *Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.*

Rulers, powers, world forces of darkness, and spiritual wickedness are all headed by Satan himself! There is no bigger, badder, more brutal enemy that we could ever face! You had better be armed!

Ephesians 6:14: (NKJV) *Stand therefore, **having girded your waist with truth**, having put on the breastplate of righteousness...*

Note the belt neither protects nor attacks, it simply holds everything together.

(Source: *Commentary by J. Vernon McGee, "Thru the Bible"*) "Having your loins girt about with truth:" In the ancient garment of that day, the girdle about the loins held in place every other part of the uniform of the soldier. It was essential. To tell you the truth, if the girdle was lost, you lost everything.

Roman Legionary's clothing (belt), *Phalera Filmworks*

- *The military belt insures the weapons remained firmly in place. The belt is made of leather and has metal plates for both decoration and reinforcement. At the front is an apron of leather straps, decorated with metal disks and pendants.*



John 17:17-18: (NKJV) ¹⁷Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth. ¹⁸As You sent me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.



1 Peter 1:13-16: (NKJV) ¹³Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; ¹⁴as obedient children, not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; ¹⁵but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, ¹⁶because it is written, Be holy, for I am holy.

The truth of Scripture needs to be planted in and held firmly in our minds. It is profound that God's word gives all of the rest of the armor a consistent base from which to be able to function.



Observations about this truth:

- *It is of God* - therefore of higher origin than any other source;
- *It is consistent* - it gives black and white principles from which we can deal with all shades of gray;
- *It is eternal* - it defines not only what *has* happened and what is at present, but it also defines what *will be*;
- *It is irrefutable* - it stands the tests of time, philosophy, compromise and doubt.

This truth is the foundation - perhaps the unnoticed foundation - for victory over Satan! That little belt of truth is very important in our Christian life.

Just how good a weapon is the Shield of Faith?

Ephesians 6:16: (NASB) *in addition to all, taking up **the shield of faith** with which you will be able to extinguish all the flaming arrows of the evil one.*

What "style" shield is this?

(Source: Bible Commentary from Jamieson, Fausset and Brown) Shield - the large, oblong, oval, door-like shield of the Romans, four feet long by two and a half feet broad; not the small, round buckler.

A buckler is a different kind of shield. Both types of shields are biblical:

Psalms 91:4: *He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.*

The buckler is a mobile protection, largely to be controlled by the soldier who bears it:

Proverbs 2:7: *He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler to them that walk uprightly.*



Observations about the shield:

- This shield is carried onto the battlefield - it can be put down.
- It is a massive portable protection - an offensive weapon for pushing back an enemy.



- It represents a double protection carried to cover the armor that one wears on the body.
- You won't storm a castle with it! It's meant to form a wall of defense.
- You will be protected when in a place of vulnerability - a place where there are no walls. It is a portable wall, just like our faith should be. Do we carry our portable wall wherever we go?
- This shield is specific to quenching the fiery darts of The Wicked One. A buckler would not suffice, as we are clearly overmatched in this battle.

This type of shield is featured to send us a specific message: We are *not* to seek the hand-to-hand combat that would be appropriate for a buckler. We *are* to be on the battlefield with our fellow soldiers and fight together. There is safety within the fellowship of Christianity.

As an example, in the early church, the Jewish Christians and the Gentile Christians had to learn to stand side-by-side and be willing to die together for their cause.

The shield's purpose is to protect our whole person. We need to be able to stay behind it to provide an added layer of protection from what could blindside us. We can't fight the fight without faith.

Proverbs 18:10: *The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous runs into it and is safe.*

When your shield is down in a position of difficulty, we can run to that strong tower!

Faith as a shield thwarting the darts of the enemy in action:

Psalms 56:1-4: (NKJV) ¹Be merciful to me, O God, for man would swallow me up; Fighting all day he oppresses me. ²My enemies would hound me all day, for there are many who fight against me, O Most High. ³Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You. ⁴In God (I will praise His word), in God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?



A caller suggested: Hebrews 11:6: *Without faith, it is impossible to please God.*

Without faith, it is impossible to fight this battle against the wiles of the devil!

James 2:18-20: (NASB) ¹⁸But someone may well say, You have faith and I have works; show me your faith without the works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ¹⁹You believe that God is one. You do well; the demons also believe, and shudder. ²⁰But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

Faith with no works is like having the shield but staying home. We can't cower in the background.

Works with no faith is like showing up on the battlefield with no shield. We can't try standing on our own without God's strength.

1 Peter 5:9: (NASB) *But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.*



So, how do you use the Sword of the Spirit?

Ephesians 6:17: (NKJV) *And take the helmet of salvation, and **the sword of the Spirit**, which is the word of God;*



All of the other armor is in place to protect and guard that which is vulnerable. This sword is the only purely offensive weapon, so what is it capable of doing?

2 Corinthians 5:17: (NKJV) *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

So, if the Spirit is described as a sword, we can safely say that this sword is a gift from God and it gives its chosen user a great power to wield.

It is called the "sword of the Spirit," yet it is defined as the "word of God." The new creation, begotten of the spirit of God, can use and understand the word of God. Anyone can use the word of God as a sword (such as a non-believer quoting a Scripture in a negative way), but not with the sword of the Spirit, using the attitude in which the Scriptures are presented. You need God's Spirit to be able to properly use God's word.

The Apostle Paul demonstrates some proper use of this power:

1 Corinthians 2:1-5: (NKJV) *¹And I, brethren, when I came to you, did not come with excellence of speech or of wisdom declaring to you the testimony of God. ²For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified. ³I was with you in weakness, in fear, and in much trembling. ⁴And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.*



Observations about the sword:

- It is a weapon of offence we can use to attack the enemy.
- It is given to us to use in our hand.
- We choose how to wield it. Do we use it sparingly and only on Sundays, or every day?
- We can put it down.

Do you carry your sword in your phone?

What is a primary differences between all of the armor versus the Shield of Faith and the Sword of the Spirit? All other armor is given by God and is fastened onto us. The Shield of Faith and the Sword of the Spirit, by contrast, are held and actively used by us, picturing what we give to God.





The temptations in this world are enticing! God has prepared for us all that we need to stand firm. We can have courage in the face of fear. Courage is not the absence of fear; it is taking pro-active action in the face of fear. We want to be a good soldier for Christ.

Let's take another look at our theme text:

Romans 13:12: (NASB) *The night is almost gone, and the day is near. Therefore let us lay aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.*

If we are embroiled in the “deeds of darkness,” our armor of light won’t fit. Satan wants us to think we are battling alone, but we stand shoulder to shoulder with our fellow soldiers.

Ephesians 6:14: (NKJV) *Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the **breastplate of righteousness**...*

So, whose righteousness are we talking about here?

Romans 3:9-12: (NASB) ⁹What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; ¹⁰as it is written, There is none righteous, not even one; ¹¹There is none who understands, There is none who seeks for God; ¹²All have turned aside, together they have become useless; There is none who does good, There is not even one.

The playing field for soldiers is level. No one comes into Christ in a favored state because of their personal “high standing” before God. All are sinners and as such are all worthy of death. We are all broken, battered and bruised but can come together and be armed with the righteousness of Jesus to stand strong.

1 John 2:1-3: (NASB) ¹My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; ²and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world. ³By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments.

The righteousness of Jesus protects our vital organs.

 **Roman Legionary's clothing (breastplate), Phalera Filmworks**

- A Legionary soldier was of course well armed, but his body is also very well protected by a helmet, armor (breastplate), and a shield. His body armor is made of iron plates riveted to heavy leather straps on the inside of a harness so they won't break easily during a fight. When the armor is assembled, he can put it on like a jacket...The breastplate weighs almost 10 kilos (about 22 pounds), but because the different parts move along with the body movement and the weight is spread evenly over the upper body, he can wear it in relative comfort all day long.





Observations about the breastplate:

- This breastplate of righteousness is in fact the righteousness and justification of Jesus.
- It is a weapon of defense, as the Ransom satisfies the just requirements of God and saves us from death.
- For it to protect all of our vital organs it must be attached to us - it must move as we move.
- This breastplate is held in place by the girdle of the truth of God's plan, for God's plan is centered on the price that Jesus paid.

Wearing this righteousness warrants choices that lead to a dramatic change in our behavior:

2 Corinthians 6:14-18: (NASB) ¹⁴Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness? ¹⁵Or what harmony has Christ with Belial, or what has a believer in common with an unbeliever? ¹⁶Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, I will dwell in them and walk among them; And I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ¹⁷Therefore, come out from their midst and be separate, says the Lord. And do not touch what is unclean; And I will welcome you. ¹⁸And I will be a father to you, And you shall be sons and daughters to Me, Says the Lord Almighty.

Being a soldier of Christ is a different life - from the inside out.

What kind of footwear do we have?

Ephesians 6:15: (NKJV) *and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*

This seems like an odd statement - your feet wear the "preparation" of the Gospel of peace? Why not wear the Gospel of peace itself?



Roman Legionary's clothing (sandals), Phalera Filmworks



- *His military sandals have been cut from a single piece of leather. The thick sole has hobnails. This prevents the sandals from wearing down, and it gives him a firm grip on the slippery soil.*

You can buy nearly anything on the internet these days! One website even sells new "Roman Legion sandals" (for \$65!) including the hobnails that keep the sole from wearing out too quickly!

First, God is a God of peace:

Romans 16:20: (NASB) *The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet. The grace of our Lord Jesus be with you.*



We can't win over Satan, but we can fight and in turn God will crush Satan. We win the battle over ourselves by our self-denial and our Christ-likeness.

Second, the "good news" of the Gospel confirms that peace and salvation are derived from the plan of the God of peace:

Isaiah 52:7: How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!

Feet imply you are carrying something, like a delivery person. We carry with us and spread the Gospel of peace. We literally carry that Gospel wherever we go, the "good news."

Third, the "good news" confirms the pathway to peace and salvation:

2 Corinthians 5:18-20: (NASB) ¹⁸Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ¹⁹namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. ²⁰Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God.

Once we, as true Christians, are reconciled to God through Christ, we become ambassadors. Ambassadors live in a foreign country but represent the government of the country from which you came. As an ambassador for Christ, we are coming from the kingdom of God, essentially. We represent that government and carry it to others. There is a pathway to salvation and our responsibility is to show that pathway.

Fourth, to know all of this as a soldier of Christ is to be responsible for it - to be prepared to present it:

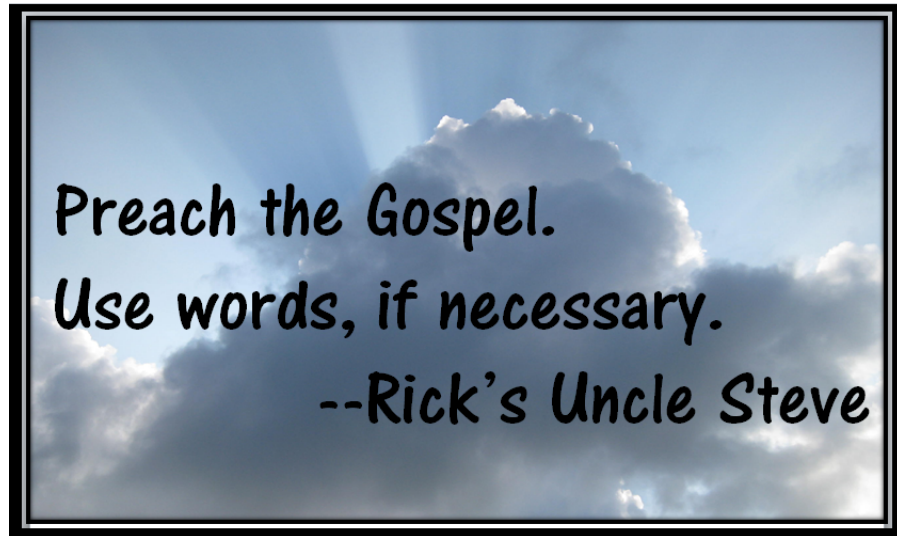
1 Peter 3:14-15: (NKJV) ¹⁴But even if you should suffer for righteousness sake, you are blessed. And do not be afraid of their threats, nor be troubled. ¹⁵But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

**Do you know the truth of God or do you take someone else's word for it?
The idea is to be prepared! We need to know why we believe what we believe.
The faith in the Scriptures is not blind.
It is informed, it is intelligent, it has integrity, and it has something concrete to offer!
The preparation of the Gospel of peace that we wear on our feet means
we are prepared to carry it to our destination.**



Fifth, wherever your steps take you, you spread the Gospel.

Romans 10:14-15: (NRSV) ¹⁴But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? ¹⁵And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent? As it is written, How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news!



We should have such a powerful influence on those around us that people see our kindness, generosity, integrity, and more. These sandals are tied to our feet. They can't just be kicked off. This is a powerful part of the armor because it carries us to deliver the message of the Gospel in any way possible. Most often it isn't our words, but it is instead our actions and how we live.

So, the message here is simple: Wherever you go, whatever you do, if you are engaged in this battle, one of your responsibilities is to have the "Gospel of Peace" reflected in your every step.

Habakkuk 3:19: *The LORD God is my strength, and he will make my feet like hinds' feet, and he will make me to walk upon mine high places...*

So, if righteousness is body armor, what protects our brain?



Ephesians 6:17: (NKJV) And take the *helmet of salvation*, and the *sword of the Spirit*, which is the word of God;

(Source: Bible commentator Albert Barnes) The helmet was a cap made of thick leather, or brass, fitted to the head, and was usually crowned with a plume, or crest, as an ornament. Its use was to guard the head from a blow by a sword, or war club, or battle axe.

Obviously, this helmet is there to protect the head, the mind, the attitude, the control center for the entire soldier. How fitting that this protection is made of salvation, for we must have an intellectual acceptance and understanding of the ransom of Jesus on our behalf. With this understanding in place, we are able to truly focus on the battle at hand.



Isaiah 1:17-18: (NKJV) ¹⁷*Learn to do good; Seek justice, rebuke the oppressor; Defend the fatherless, plead for the widow.* ¹⁸*Come now, and let us reason together, says the Lord, Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.*

LEARN - SEEK - REBUKE - DEFEND - PLEAD - these have to be protected by salvation. We could easily be taken off course by Satan. Even though we are sinful, we are considered clean in the sight of God because of salvation from the righteousness of Jesus. Our head must be protected by that salvation.

This salvation through Jesus should be a primary focus of what we look for in life:

Hebrews 12:2-3: (NASB) ²*fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. This salvation through Jesus should be a primary focus of what we meditate on in life:* ³*For consider him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.*

We should be inspired to get up and keep fighting! We should approach the battle with gratitude and thanksgiving that the armor is even available.

As long as we do our part, we are invincible until our work is done!

Do we see that all of the armor is built around Jesus?

This salvation through Jesus must become part of us:

2 Timothy 2:14-16: (NASB) ¹⁴*Remind them of these things, and solemnly charge them in the presence of God not to wrangle about words, which is useless and leads to the ruin of the hearers.* ¹⁵*Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth.* ¹⁶*But avoid worldly and empty chatter, for it will lead to further ungodliness,*

Avoid worldly and empty chatter - the helmet is to focus us clearly on the object at hand.



The pieces of armor are all *strapped on* and become a part of us. We need to move forward with all the armor on or we are in danger.

So, what does this armor do?

Sandals - bring our feet to a thoughtful delivering of the Gospel. We have to know what we are talking about and be willing to carry it with us.

Breastplate - the righteousness of Jesus that is attached to us, protecting our vital organs. Remember it is put on like a jacket and it protects us with the righteousness of Jesus and not our own.

Belt - the truth that binds all of our protection to us and that holds the sword of the Spirit "at the ready."



Helmet - The salvation that protects our thoughts, and therefore our deeds, as we go into battle.

Shield - the large external protection of faith that can protect our entire being when necessary. When standing shoulder-to-shoulder with other soldiers, we can create a wall of faith to push back evil.

Sword - God’s own power and influence placed by our side and in our hand to battle an enemy we could never defeat on our own. It is an offensive weapon that is the word of God. We have the responsibility to make sure we strike well and clean. We apply the Spirit of God to the word of God so that it is used appropriately.

The Whole Armor of God: “Don’t leave home without it!”

**Got armor?
For Jonathan and Rick and Christian Questions,
Think about it...!**

**And now even more to think about...
only in the Full Edition of CQ Rewind!**



A bit more about the context of our discussion today:

Ephesians 6:10-18: (NKJV) ¹⁰Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. ¹¹Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. ¹²For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. ¹³Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. ¹⁴Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, ¹⁵and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; ¹⁶above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. ¹⁷And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; ¹⁸praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

First, about the concept of being “strong” in the Lord:

Strong: Strongs #1743 endunamoo (en-doo-nam-o'-o); to empower:
KJV - enable, (increase in) strength (-en), be (make) strong.

So, the first lesson here is that it is not mere strength that we are talking about - it is empowerment! Mere strength is having the force necessary to overcome, but empowerment is being given the tools to use the strength to overcome!

Philippians 4:13: *I can do all things through Christ which **strengtheneth <1743>** me.*

1 Timothy 1:12: *And I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath **enabled <1743>** me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry;*



2 Timothy 2:1: *Thou therefore, my son, be **strong <1743>** in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.*

Why do we need this empowerment and the protection of the armor? First, because Satan is crafty!

Wiles: Strongs #3180 meth-od-i'-ah from a compound of 3326 and 3593 [cf "method"]; AV-lie in wait ,wile 1, cunning arts, deceit, craft, trickery

Thayers:

1. to follow up or investigate by method and settled plan;
2. to follow craftily, frame devices, deceive:

2 Corinthians 11:3: (ASV) *But I fear, lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve in his craftiness, your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity and the purity that is toward Christ.*

Colossians 2:18-19: (NKJV) ¹⁸*Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, ¹⁹and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God.*

Second reason: the fight is SO MUCH BIGGER THAN WE ARE!

Ephesians 6:12: (NKJV) *For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.*

(Source: Biblical Commentary by Alfred Barnes) But against principalities: There can be no doubt whatever that the apostle alludes here to evil spirits. Like good angels, they were regarded as divided into ranks and orders, and were supposed to be under the control of one mighty leader. See Barnes "Eph 1:21". It is probable that the allusion here is to the ranks and orders which they sustained before their fall, something like which they may still retain. The word principalities refers to principal rulers, or chieftains.

So, it seems as though we are at war with foes that are far beyond our own human frame and capability, but not above and beyond the capacity of Christ! Look at how this next text cancels out all of the advantages Satan and his army would have over us...

Ephesians 1:18-23: (ASV) ¹⁸*having the eyes of your heart enlightened, that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints, ¹⁹and what the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to that working of the strength of his might ²⁰which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and made him to sit at his right hand in the heavenly places, ²¹far above all rule, and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: ²²and he put all things in subjection under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, ²³which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.*

So in a battle where we would be overmatched, overwrought and overrun, we are actually, through Christ and God's grace, in a position to win. Is that awesome or what!?



A few more quotes:

You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it. Margaret Thatcher

The battle of life is, in most cases, fought uphill; and to win it without a struggle were perhaps to win it without honor. If there were no difficulties there would be no success; if there were nothing to struggle for, there would be nothing to be achieved. Samuel Smiles

Courage is not the absence of fear - rather courage is bold action in the presence of fear... Rick